



Office of the Director

150 N. 18th Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85007-2670
(602) 542-1025
(602) 542-1062 Fax

JANET NAPOLITANO, GOVERNOR
SUSAN GERARD, DIRECTOR

NEWS RELEASE

Arizona Genealogy Web Site Surpasses Three Million Visits, Saving Time and Money for Family Researchers

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Jan. 3, 2006

Contact: Michael Murphy, ADHS Public Information: (602) 542-1094

A state web site that puts more than 400,000 historical Arizona birth and death records at the fingertips of genealogy buffs is a mega hit, with nearly 3.5 million site visits.

“Surpassing the three million mark in such a short period of time underscores a large and growing demand for historical records,” said Department of Health Services Director Susan Gerard. “Genealogists and casual family tree researchers have found they can save time and money with our site when searching for their family roots.”

Since introducing the site in February 2004, the Department of Health has recorded almost 3.5 million successful server requests. That means more than 3 million visitors have accessed the historical records.

“This is a wonderful example of how state government is providing innovative, efficient customer service to the citizens of Arizona. ADHS has done a great job determining what the customers want and making it a reality,” said Governor Napolitano. “I applaud the efforts of ADHS to find out what their customers want. We are continuing to build government that works better, costs less, and delivers services through IT initiatives.”

Before the website was available, accessing historical records was cumbersome and costly, requiring manual searches by state Vital Records employees, a \$3 fee per request, and a two- to three-week wait to receive them.

There have been more than 2.4 million documents downloaded from this website. If these documents had been requested from the state Office of Vital Records, it would have cost the public more than \$7 million (\$3 per document).

(more)

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This figure does not include savings to the public of having to travel to the state Vital Records office to get the document, and the time state employees would have to spend to find and copy the document. This website has produced exceptional savings.

The site's global popularity is evident by praise in emails to the Department:

"Thank you so much for putting this information out on the Internet," an Arizona woman wrote. "It has proven invaluable in researching my family history ... Even having been born and raised in Arizona, there are so many relatives I could not tie together until I could do this research."

"Just a note to say that this web site is fantastic!" wrote a user from Canada. "I was able to find death certificates for three Canadian relatives who moved to Arizona and died there. You have saved me lots of time and trouble!"

Another user wrote, *"Amazing! Thank you, thank you for LOTS of hard work to put up the site. My husband found his mother's parents last night. It really meant a lot to him."*

Thanks to a partnership between the Department of Health Services, the Arizona State Library and Archives, and the Mesa Family History Library, the Web site allows free and instant access to more than 400,000 images of original Arizona birth and death certificates that state law has made public record. The site is <http://genealogy.az.gov>.

By law, birth certificates become public after 75 years, and death certificates become public after 50 years. Those tracing family roots now may search by name for Arizona birth certificates between 1887 and 1929, and Arizona death certificates between 1878 and 1954.

Gerard said the site provides ongoing savings as information on the site expands.

"We foresee its continued popularity as people learn about their heritage, and discover relatives. It's very exciting," she said.

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